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MR. GARDINIER'S SPEECH

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES,

ON

FOREIGN RELATIONS,

WHILE UNDER THE CONSIDERATION OF MR. CAMPBELL'S RESOLUTIONS,

DECEMBER 1808.

MR. Speaker, I had intended to defer the delivery of my sentiments upon the second resolution, until that resolution should come before the house. But the course which the debate has taken, has produced a change in my original intention.

That the first resolution is an unnecessary one, because no clear, definite, practical results can flow from it, appears to me self-evident. Are the people of this country suspected of an intention to abandon their rights or their independence? Indeed, sir, they are not. Why then is it, that we are called upon to make a *new* declaration of independence? Or was the administration conducted in such a manner as to make the firmness and patriotism of the nation itself doubted abroad? Even I, sir, who am not suspected of a blind confidence in our rulers, will not advance such a charge.

The true question is not, is the matter expressed in this abstract proposition, true? But is it necessary that a resolution containing it should be passed by this house? I agree with the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Campbell,) that it would be no less ridiculous to pass this resolution than to pass one that the sun shines. Allowing both to be true; both are equally unnecessary to be embodied in a resolution of this house. Begin this system of abstract legislation; and where are you to stop? Sir, it partakes too much of the character of disturbed, revolutionary time. To such a blasphemous height was this notion of voting abstract propositions or declarations, or truisms (call them what you will) carried at one time in France, that their convention very gravely decreed "*that there* WAS A GOD!" This was a self-evident truth; and being so could not become more so by being decreed. And if the edicts of Great-Britian and France go to the destruction of our "rights, honours, and independence," our voting that such is their operation, makes it neither more nor less true.

But it is said, a select committee have placed the resolution before us—and we are bound to vote whether the assertions it contains

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are true or false. Why, sir, if I should offer a resolution that at this moment the sun shines, and some one should second me, would it be contended that this house ought gravely to proceed to the question, and if any member should say, "I vote against this resolution because it is too true to be made more so; and because therefore I think it unnecessary to be passed," that he, sir, should be considered blind?

Again, gentlemen, some too, with whom I am in the habit of acting, say, at the worst the resolution is harmless—it ties you down to no specific course, and therefore you may as well vote for it; that to vote against it, will afford a handle against our popularity—that the resolution itself is an artful one—a trap set to catch the federalists, as it will hold them up to suspicion, if they vote against it—for the vote will appear upon the journals when the argument is not to be found there. Well, sir, if it be in truth a trap to catch poor federalism in, I, for one, sir, am willing to be caught. I never deceived the people whom I have the honor to represent, either by giving a vote to the propriety of which my judgment was opposed, or by professing opinions which I did not entertain: and, sir, I trust in God, I never shall. The applause of my constituents is dear to me. But I would rather strive to *deserve it*—than, *not deserving*, to *receive* it. Yes, sir, my course shall be always a plain one—a right straight forward course. I have not acquired the confidence of my constituents by increasing their delusions. I have always laboured to disperse them. At my first election to this house, a decided majority of them were opposed to my politics. The thought has often distressed me. But the cause of that distress exists no longer. And therefore, sir, I will go on discharging my duty with the most scrupulous obedience to my judgment—and where the weight of a hair ought to turn the scale, it shall turn it.

But if I had no other objection against this abstract, "harmless" resolution—there is one which would be decisive: I would reject it on account of "the company it keeps." The committee, for reasons which I shall not stop to disclose, have thought it important to introduce this, by way of propping the second one. That second one, sir, the undoubted object, and inevitable tendency of which, my whole soul recoils from, which I abhor and deprecate, as fatal to the prosperity and happiness of my country—as the grave of its honor—and I fear I do not go too far, when I add, of its *independence!* that resolution is not alone submission to France,—but, under pretence of resisting her infractions of the laws of nations—her violations of the sacred rights of hospitality—her laughing to scorn the obligation of treaties—it makes us submit to all—to encourage a perseverance in all.—Nay, sir, it throws the whole weight of our power into her scale, and we become not only the passive, but to the whole extent of our means, the active instruments of that policy which we affect to abhor. This, sir, unhappily, is capable of the most clear demonstration; and in the proper place it shall appear so.

I enter now upon the discussion of the second resolution. And althongh I am aware how little professions of sincerity and embar-

rassment, are generally regarded---and indeed, how little they ought to be regarded, yet I cannot approach this awful subject, without declaring that I feel as if I was about to enter the sanctuary of our country's independence---and I tremble with the same fearful distrust of my powers, the same distressing perplexity which would embarrass me if I had entered the labyrinth in which was concealed the secret of that country's honor, prosperity, and glory. I do feel, sir, that we should enter upon the discussion of this question divested of all the prejudices and passion of party---no less than all foreign predilections and animosities---with clean hearts, sir,---yes---hearts seven times purified to prepare them for the discharge of the sacred, the holy duties of this awful crisis. He who can come to this debate, with other motives than to save his country, placed as it is on the brink of a dreadful precipice, deserves to be heard no where, but in the cells of the inquisition. The sound of his voice should never be suffered to pollute the hall of the representatives of the American people. But he, who thinking that he has traced the causes and the progress of our misfortunes, and that he may perhaps point the nation to a path, which may lead it back to the prosperous position, it has been made to abandon, would be a traitor to the state, if any considerations could keep him silent.

In my view, sir, we have gone on so long in error---our affairs, have been suffered to run on, year after year, into so much confusion, that it is not now easy to say what should be done. But if it is magnanimous to retract error---certainly it is only the performance of a sacred duty which their servants owe the people, to abandon a system which has produced only disappointment and disasters hitherto, and promises only ruin and disgrace in future.

The time, sir, has been, when the government was respected at home and abroad---when the people were prosperous and happy---when the political body was in high, in vigorous health---when America rejoiced in the fulness of her glory, and the whole extent of the United States presented a scene unknown in any other country, in any other age. Behold now the mournful contrast, the sad reverse! We are *indeed fallen, fallen from our high estate?*" The nation is sick---sick at heart. We are called upon to apply a remedy; and none will answer which shall not be effectual. No quack prescriptions will answer now. And the cure to be effectual must not persevere in a course which has not only produced no good, nor promises any; but which has brought the patient (if I may use the figure of the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. Nelson) to his present forlorn condition. Such a perseverance may seem to argue great hardihood, or if you please, spirit; but after all it is nothing but the desperate phrenzy of a losing half ruined gamester.

It becomes, therefore, at last, indispensable to take a retrospective view of our affairs. And if, in taking this view, we should find the cause of our disasters, we must not fear to contemplate it, to hold it up; and having grown wise by experience, we must not be prevented by false pride, from profiting by it,---we must not shrink from the exercise of a virtue because it is also an imperious duty. And

I hope that no gentleman who hears me is unwilling to sacrifice the popularity of the administration to the salvation of the country.

Permit me then, sir, to go back to that period in our history, which immediately preceded the adoption of our present form of government. What was then our condition? The people were poor---for there was no commerce to assist agriculture---There was no revenue for general objects. Many states were hardly able to collect enough for state purposes. And of course there was no such thing as public credit; although there was an immense floating debt. We had no reputation abroad---there was no confidence even at home. But sir, we had a Washington!---And we had the pupils of Washington-----men whom he knew to be faithful in the cabinet, for he had found them faithful in the darkest stages of the revolution. The nation happily had not been deluded---they knew their friends by their *deeds*---they had not yet yielded to the sweet fascination of the seductive popular declamations of these latter times. Men were known by what they *did*---not by what they *said*. These men, sir, had the sagacity to discover the secret springs of our prosperity and happiness and glory. And they were able to strike them with a powerful hand---and with a powerful hand they did strike them---And instantly, as if by enchantment the scene changed. Suddenly agriculture raised her drooping head, for commerce beckoned her to prosperity. Your people began to pay their debts and to become rich. Public credit was restored; the treasury began to fill rapidly. Sources of revenue were explored; certain of continually encreasing, equally certain of being never exhausted except by folly and madness. Indeed, sir, so perfect was the financial machinery that it admitted of no improvement. It required no more skill in the successors of the illustrious Hamilton, to make this instrument "discourse most excellent music," than it would a child to play a hand organ. An end was put to our Indian wars; our Algerine captives were redeemed---our reputation was established abroad; and the United States assumed their just rank among the nations of the earth! This was indeed a work worthy the illustrious patriots who atchieved it. It was the result of that profound practical wisdom, which never yielding to the deception of brilliant theory, saw the public interest with a clear eye, and pursued it with a firm and steady step; and it was no wonder that it was successful. Let me add too, that all this was accomplished without taxation being felt by the people.

But this great prosperity was not without interruption. It received a stroke, sir, deep and dangerous, and almost mortal, from the tremendous system of spoilations commenced by Great Britain in 1793. Misfortunes cast themselves across the path of nations as well as individuals. They are often unavoidable---and no nation can hope to be always exempt from them. The wisdom of the human mind is displayed in putting an end to them in private affairs---and in public that statesman only is great, who can overcome and disperse them, who, though he cannot avert the bolt, can prevent the ruin it threatens. At the period of which I speak, we had such

statesmen. Yes, sir, the alarm was depicted on every countenance—though the nation staggered to its centre under the severity of the shock it had received—yet was the administration equal to the dreadful emergency—it had brought the nation into existence and prosperity, and it was equal to the preservation of both. And they shewed it, not by venting their rage in idle reproaches, but by applying efficient remedies to the diseases of the country.

Let it be remembered that justice was to be obtained from Great Britain; from that power which is now represented and held up to our indignation, as "proud, unprincipled, imperious, and tyrannical;" and which certainly was at least as much so then: for then she had on her side, all Europe engaged in a combination against France, and France was alone as England is now. In short she was *then* on the continent of Europe what France is *now*. Yet from this same country, did our government succeed in obtaining not only reparation for the spoilations committed, but a surrender of the western posts also. I repeat, sir, that all this was accomplished when Great Britain was not less imperious in disposition, but more formidable in power than she is now. And surely all this ought to appear strange and wonderful indeed to those, who have been deluded into the idea, that when Great Britain was struggling, gasping for her existence, the same thing was impossible.—That has with ease and under more inauspicious circumstances, been accomplished which the men now in power pretend they have attempted, in vain. Still strange as it may seem to them it is fact; it is history. Well, sir, how was this miracle brought about? By a process very plain and simple. The administration was *sincerely* desirous of peace; and that single object in their eye, they exerted their abilities to obtain it, and consequently did obtain it. The instructions of the minister breathed a desire of peace—of reconciliation upon terms compatible with the honour of both nations. The administration did not send with their minister, a non-importation act, a proclamation, or a permanent embargo, by way of exhibiting their love of peace. The refinement in diplomacy which sends with the negotiator a new cause of quarrel for the purpose of accelerating the adjustment of an old one, was not yet invented. No, sir, Mr. Jay, (and the name of that stern, inflexible patriot and republican, I always repeat with delight and veneration—because he is a patriot and a republican.) [Here Mr. Upham took the advantage of a pause made by Mr. G. to observe, that as the gentleman appeared considerably exhausted, &c. he would move an adjournment, which was taken by ayes and noes, and lost, ayes 47—noes 65—Mr. G. *voting in the affirmative.*] Mr. Jay had no disposition to bully the British government into justice—he had no objection that they should have all the merit of returning voluntarily to a sense of justice, provided, his *country* might have the benefit of substantial reparation. The stern sage of the revolution became the courteous ambassador, and appealing "to the justice and magnanimity of his Britannic majesty," he demanded redress and he obtained it. The British government saw that ours was sincerely disposed to be at peace with them, and pursuing the natural direction of their inter-

ests, there was no difficulty in making peace. Our plundered merchants were compensated—paid, sir, bona fide. We did not purchase redress—We did not pay for the surrender of the western posts which were our right, and out of the purchase money indemnify a portion of our own citizens. No, the payment was to all—and in right old fashioned "*British Gold.*"—all counted down on the nail. I wish that I could with equal truth say the same thing of more modern treaties.

And now, sir—compensation being made by Great Britain for the spoilations on our commerce—the Western Posts being surrendered—a commercial treaty being established—the dark cloud which obscured our prospects being dispersed—the sun of our prosperity once more burst forth in all its radiance, and again all was well.

I care not what were the objections of the day—begotten in the brain of faction—and cherished in mobs—under the treaty we were prosperous and happy, and that one fact is enough for me. Bad as the treaty was represented to be, and the worst feature of it most probably was, that it was a British treaty—Bad as it was—the continuance of its existence has been precisely coextensive with the progress of our prosperity!—It made our people rich and happy—and bad as it was, they would have cause to rejoice indeed if the present administration had furnished them with just such another.

France saw with uneasiness the return of a good understanding between America and G. Britain. And she, in her turn, let loose her plunderers upon our commerce. Again the wisdom of the government was called into action, and again it produced the most happy result. What did they do? An embassy was dispatched to France—Redress was demanded—But the ministers were not received—nor could be, till a douceur—a tribute was paid. From a nation which returned such an answer, redress could not be expected—and there was an end of negotiation. Britain and France had acted towards us with equal injustice—the disposition of our government, its desire of peace was the same with both.—Its conduct was the same to both—but France would not even hear our demands. The American government were at no loss how to act. The case was a plain one. One nation robs another—that other demands reparation—prevarication is the reply. It requires no skill to see in such case, that to coax the offender into reparation is impossible. Accordingly our government did not hesitate as to the course it should pursue they did not wait to be spurred on by any government to an assertion of their rights, they would not leave it one moment doubtful whether they had the disposition and the courage to assert them. They proceeded immediately to annul the French treaty, to pass non-intercourse laws—they built ships of war—and sent them upon the ocean to protect our commerce. They were not so obstinate but that they would receive instruction even from the author of the Notes on Virginia, who, *in that work*, so judiciously recommends a navy. Our little armament picked up the French cruisers—great and small—the coast—the sea was soon cleared of them. And our commerce again visited every clime in safety.

I will here remark, sir, that during all this time, the staple commodities (particularly of the Northern states) suffered no diminution; but an increase in price. Well, sir, France very soon discovered that she had nothing to gain, and we nothing to lose by such a state of things. Even then, when she had some naval power, she discovered this. She was therefore very soon disposed to change it. A Treaty was patched up in the end—and something like the appearance of redress provided for.

Now, sir, for the result. A former administration were able to settle our differences with Great Britain, although she governed all Europe; although she was unjust, haughty, and imperious. Now the same thing is said to be impossible! A former administration were able, after a fair ne-

gotiation had failed, to bring France, who had then some maritime power, on her marrow bones. And now, when she has none, again the same thing is impossible! How happens all this? Sir, I am afraid your administration have committed most capital mistakes. They have been unwilling to learn wisdom from the experience and success of their predecessors. I do fear, and I shall be obliged to prove, that, on the one hand they have been actuated by, certainly they have never (following the example of a former administration,) manifested a sincere disposition to accommodate our difficulties with G. Britain. And on the other hand they have in no instance shewn to France that bold front which in more unpromising times brought the terrible republic to her senses. These two errors, these wilful, wanton aberrations from established policy, are the true causes of all our misfortunes. It is owing to them that we have, if we believe the administration sincere, *two* enemies who are already at war with each other, and we, the only instance of the kind, since the creation of the world, are to step out a third and distinct belligerent! a sort of Ismaelite belligerent; our hand against every nation, and every nation's hand against us. We are in a situation which defies hope—one in which we have but a single miserable consolation—that though it promises nothing but ruin, yet it is so ridiculous, so ludicrous that we can but smile at it.

These remarks are extorted from me a little out of their order. I return to the period of the restoration of peace between the United States and France.

The administration now (1801) passed into the hands of other men. They received a country, rich, prosperous, and increasing in prosperity. A people contented and happy; or discontented only with those who had been the authors of their prosperity. They received a treasury full and overflowing, giving a vigour and a spring to public credit, almost unknown before, and to the reputation of the country a dignity unsullied—They found us in peace and friendship with all nations; our commerce whitening every sea and rewarding agriculture for all its industry, and every one sitting in peace under his own vine and his own fig-tree. Our country presented to the animated philanthropist one uninterrupted display of liberty, of gaiety, and of felicity. O happy! happy period of our history—never, never, I fear to return. And if ever truth dropped from the lips of man, it was when the nation was declared to be in "the full tide of successful experiment." Never were the destinies of a nation in more wonderful prosperity committed to men. That prosperity had been acquired at a price no less unparalleled—at the expense of the destruction and disgrace of those whose wisdom and energy had produced it.

The *new men*, sir, were not required to bring order out of confusion: that had been done already.

They were not called upon to lay the deep and strong foundations of national prosperity and happiness: that had been done already.

They were not enjoined to 'multiply' the talents committed to their stewardship: that was unnecessary—they were merely commanded to preserve them undiminished.

They were not required to create a paradise.—But to keep uninjured that which was committed to their guardianship.

They promised, indeed; they were so rash, in the fulness of their exultation, as to promise to do more; but folly alone could believe them: and for breaking this promise I forgive them, for to do more was impossible. And if they had but preserved unimpaired, if they had not totally destroyed the inestimable treasures entrusted to them, I would have endeavoured to overcome my resentment, my indignation, and my despair.

In performance of their lofty promises, in disgrace of sacred duties what have they done? In what condition do they leave the country which eight years since "in the full tide of successful experiment" fell into their hands? they present to us, sir, the gloomy reverse of all it was.—The people dis-

contented and distressed—all becoming daily more and more poor; except indeed that class of rich speculators, whose wealth and whose hearts enable them to prey upon the wants of their countrymen. The despair and dismay of 1786 are returned!—The prosperity of twenty years is annihilated at one stroke! The sources of revenue are dried up. The treasury indeed may be now full—but it must continually diminish—and without its usual supply, it must soon be empty. We have still some credit. But how long, sir, can that be maintained, when it is known that we have no longer the means, allowing us to possess the disposition, to fulfil our pecuniary engagements? When you cannot collect a cent upon imposts, and dare not lay a direct tax, how far you will be able to obtain money on loan is to say the least of it very questionable. But I will hasten to finish the contrast I was about to make. Commerce, sir, has perished, and agriculture lies dead at her side—for these twin sisters must flourish or die together. No nation in the world is our friend—our paradise is becoming a wilderness:—Our soil is stained with the blood of our own citizens; and we look around us in vain for one solitary benefit, to compensate us for all these dreadful effects of the present system.

Perhaps, sir, I may be answered—"Though all you have said be true, though our former prosperity exists no longer, it is ungenerous, it is unjust to impute the change to the agency of the administration. What has happened could not be prevented." Though such a rebuke were reasonable, I will still insist that the administration, if they deserve no censure, are certainly entitled to no praise, and can ask for no confidence. If they have not been the authors of the public calamities, they have not like their predecessors, discovered the ability to prevent them from coming thick upon us. If their hearts are honest, their heads have not discovered much soundness. No set of men, however ignorant, however stupid, could have placed the country, in a worse, or in a more deplorable situation. The truth is plain and palpable. Judging of the wisdom of administration by the result of its measures, I cannot sing praises to them for their skill and ingenuity in diplomacy. No, sir—I delight in that diplomacy which makes the poor rich; which makes industry prosperous; which spreads contentment through the land, and happiness among the people. I delight in the diplomacy whose skill and wisdom can be read in the countenance of my countrymen, and makes the face of my country the evidence of its prosperity. I like not, I abhor that diplomatic skill which can be found only *in a book!* which has produced nothing but calamity, and whose praise is written in the blood of my countrymen.

But sir, how happens it that we still remain under the distresses occasioned by the belligerents? Is there indeed a physical impossibility of removing them? From G. Britain, and that too, when she had the whole continent on her side, we could once obtain justice, not only for the past, but security for the future. From France too, we could once gain justice, but now we can gain justice from neither. What change, sir, has occurred in the state of things to produce this strange impossibility? Our commerce is more an object to Great Britain now, than it was formerly—and France can oppose to us no resistance on the ocean. And yet no remedy can be found for our calamities! Sir, I will not be the dupe of this miserable artifice. What has been done once, can be done again, by employing the same means.

The administration have committed greater errors. They have conducted all their affairs in such a style as to leave Great Britain no room to doubt, that when they asked for peace, they wanted it not. To this cause may be traced all our difficulties so far as they proceed from that power. As it regards France I fear that they have not acted the proper, the manly part. In short, sir, they have not pursued towards England the policy which saved us in '94—nor towards France the policy which was successfully opposed to French rapacity and French obstinacy in '93.

I think an error was committed, when, affecting to desire an amicable arrangement, with G. Britain, instead of treating with her as a nation not to be intimidated, much less bullied, the non-importation act was passed—For, sir, if she was so proud, so haughty and imperious, as some gentlemen delight to describe her, than to bring her to justice by assuming an attitude of menace, was evidently impossible. When therefore you passed the non-importation act, under a pretence that it would be a successful auxiliary to friendly negotiation, what could you expect but to alarm the pride, and the haughtiness and imperiousness of that nation? and doing that, how could you expect an amicable result? No, sir, it was not, and it could not be expected. You obtained a treaty indeed—but it was from a *Fox Ministry.* Yet such as it was, it was not so good as a Jay's treaty—and the executive rejected it without so much as laying it before the senate.

In support of the embargo system, gentlemen, say, if we suffer our commerce to go on the ocean, or wherever it goes, it will be crippled either by France or Great Britain. Although this is not true in the extent laid down, yet it will hold tolerably true as respects the European seas. From what gentlemen are pleased to represent as the impossibility of sailing the ocean with safety, results, (say they) the propriety and necessity of the embargo system. And they say, it is not the embargo, but the decrees and orders which are the true cause of all we suffer; that the embargo so far from being the cause of, was devised as a remedy for the evils we endure. Well, sir, for the sake of the argument, be it as they say. Has the embargo answered? Is there any probability—the slightest indication that it will answer? Has it operated to any perceptible extent, except upon ourselves during the twelvemonth it has been in existence? If then, neither the remembrance of the past, nor the prospect of the future gives the least encouragement to hope, why will gentlemen persist in the system? And that too, sir, at an expense to their own country, so enormous in amount? Will they go on obstinately amid all the discontents—or clamors (as gentlemen in very anti-republican language call the voice of the people) in the eastern and northern states? And that from mere obstinacy—an obstinacy not encouraged by the least glimmering of hope? If I could be pointed to a single fact, produced by the operation of the embargo, which would prove that it had had any other effect on the disposition of Great Britain than to irritate—or any other on France than to please, than to encourage her to a perseverance in that system of injustice, which we pretend to oppose, but to the policy of which we give all our support with an infatuated wilfulness and which therefore increases the hostility Great Britain has left from the measure: If they could shew me, sir, that the embargo will bring either to terms I would abandon the opposition at once, and come heart and hand into the support of your measures. The other day, the gentleman from S. Caroliua, Mr. Williams, almost persuaded me that it *ought* to operate upon G. Britain: but I looked and I found it *did not*, and I was convinced it *would not.*

But have gentlemen reflected, that if all the evils were drawn from Pandora's box to vex G. Britain, you could have hit on none so well calculated to call out all her resistance, and all her obstinacy, as this same expedient *the Embargo!* If she yields to us under the pressure of such a system, she discloses to us the secret of her independence! Sir, the embargo is war: it was intended as such against G. Britain. And she understands its meaning and its character too well, for us to disguise it under a pretence of its being a mere precautionary municipal measure. Its efficacy as a coercive measure, has been too often and too loudly boasted of in this house, to make its real object a secret to her. Nay, in so far, as the great and prominent features of war is coercion; in so far as war is always intended to make the adversary yield that, which he will not yield voluntarily, in so far are the embargo and the non-importation act, WAR. Each was intended to coerce Great Britain to yield to us points, which it

had been ascertained she would not yield voluntarily. It was a system of coercion, a new fangled sort of philosophical experimental war; novel to be sure in its character, but to all substantial purposes war. Instead of bloodshed, there was to be ink-shed—instead of bayonets, pens—instead of the blood arena, huge sheets of paper! Whenever Great Britain shall yield to the coercion of the non-importation, embargo, or non-intercourse system, she virtually tells the people of the United States "we are in your power whenever you choose to make a claim upon us, whether just or unjust, threaten us with an embargo, and a non-intercourse, and you bring us to your feet."—Does any gentleman believe, even allowing the pressure of the embargo to be great upon her, that she can yield, that she can afford to yield? That she can admit that we have her always perfectly in our power? Sooner would she give up in battle—sooner would she see her soldiers retreating before our bayonets: sooner would she see her armies perish under our valour, than acknowledge herself the slave of this magic wand. Her children might grow to be men, and she might try the fortune of another day: The hair of Sampson might grow on again, and his strength be renewed: But in yielding to the chance of the embargo, she places her existence in our hands, and becomes dependent upon our will for the existence of her sovereignty. Sir, the King of England cannot—he dare not yield to our embargo.

But, sir, he has not told us that he considers our embargo hostile to him—Nor has our government ever told him that it was—such a declaration has never been put to paper. No, sir, when you look into the correspondence, it would seem that the embargo was never intended as a coercive measure, nor even understood so by Great Britain. Every thing on both sides is conceived in a sincere spirit of "friendship." Our non-importation act—our proclamation, our embargo, are all acts of friendship and kindness towards Great Britain, for aught you find there. And Great Britain issues her orders in council in a reciprocating spirit of amity towards us. She is not offended with our non-importation act---nor our embargo. Not at all. Her orders are not intended to harm us. She means nothing in the world but simply to retaliate upon France---and she is sorry that almost the whole force of the blow falls upon us---but it is unavoidable. She by the laws of nations has as perfect a right to retaliate upon France as we have to make our innocent municipal regulations---and she is full as sorry that her retaliation system should wound us, as we are that our municipal regulations should incommode her. Sir, this diplomatic hypocrisy (began, I acknowledge, by us) is intolerable, sir! there is not one word of truth in the whole of it from beginning to end. The plain state of the case is this: Anterior to the non-importation act, the British treaty had expired---there were points of dispute, particularly concerning the impressment of seamen, which could not be adjusted, to the satisfaction of our government---In this state of things either we ought to have gone to war or we ought not. If we had intended to do so, stronger measures should have been resorted to than a non-importation act. If we had not intended to do so, the act should never have been passed. Those who passed it could have had but one of two objects in view; either to coerce Great Britain to the terms we demanded---or by vexing and irritating her, to raise up in due time an unnecessary fictitious quarrel, which (as this country is known to be extremely sensitive of British aggression) might ultimately end in real old fashioned war. No men could have been so weak as to calculate upon the first result. As to the other, the wisdom of the calculation is pretty strongly proved by the situation in which we now find ourselves. Sir, this is the whole mystery---and it must be explored---it must be exposed---We must understand the real character of our controversy with Great Britain---the real character, intent, and aim, of the different measures adopted by us and by her, before we can hope to heal the wounds our peace has received, or to restore the prosperity we have been unnecessarily made to abandon. I know, sir, how difficult it is to overcome matured opinions or inveterate prejudices---And I know too, that at this time, the individual

who shall venture to lay open "the bare and rotten policy" of the time, makes himself the butt of party rancour and strips himself to the unsparing "lacerations of the press." But these are considerations too feeble to deter me from my duty.

[Mr. G. appearing much exhausted, and Mr. Quincy having intimated to the house, that Mr. G. suffered under a pain in the side, moved for an adjournment. The Speaker enquired *whether Mr. G. yielded the floor?* Mr. G. replied, he had himself little inclination to continue his remarks, but the house appeared *so eager* to hear him---(a laugh) he hardly knew what answer to make.---However (he said) he would give the floor. The house then adjourned.]

The object, sir, of our present deliberations is, or ought to be, to relieve our country from the distresses under which it groans; to do this, we should be prepared to legislate with a single eye to the welfare and happiness of the nation. It is of the first necessity that we should deliberate with calmness, if we mean to apply an effectual remedy to the diseases of the state. In the remarks which I had the honor to make yesterday, I was constrained to draw a contrast between the measures and prosperity of former times, and those of the present times. Under circumstances of the same character, we were formerly able to overcome our misfortunes. Now we are not. And I did this, for the purpose of impressing upon the house an opinion that if the administration had practised upon the principles of their predecessors—all had been well, or, that if, retracing their steps, or relinquishing the path of error and misfortune, they would still be the learners of wisdom and experience, it would not even now be too late, to retrieve the affairs of the country. If I know my own heart, I did not make the comparison from any invidious purposes; but merely to turn the minds of gentlemen back to former times; that they might reflect upon the perils and calamities of those times, and the means by which an end was put to them; but in doing this, I could not avoid paying the tribute of deserved praise, and of sincere gratitude to the men under whose agency we prospered abundantly. In contrasting the conduct of the present with that of the former administration, I meant to subserve no purposes of party. Nay, sir, I could have much desired to have been spared the necessity of presenting that contrast before the nation. I could have wished to have avoided these references, lest I might excite party feeling in others; lest I might appear to be governed by them myself. But truth could not be attained by any other course; and I have been compelled to take it.

It will be remembered that I have spoken merely with regard to the exterior relations of the country. I have not forgotten that the men then in power were accused of being enemies of liberty—friends of monarchy, and all that. I shall not go out of my way to expose these accusations, sir, because they have nothing to do with the subject I am examining. The positions I would establish, are these: The former administration conducted wisely—and their perfect and entire success proves it. The men now in power, have departed from the path which, as experience demonstrates, led to success. They have spurned the wisdom of experience—they have not conducted wisely, and their defeat, the misfortunes and the distresses of the country prove it. We must abandon the present disastrous and ruinous system therefore, and return to the old one, if we are sincerely disposed to restore the nation to prosperity.

Sir! The former administration sought honorable accommodation with Great Britain with so much sincerity; with such a single eye to that object, that they were accused, even when WASHINGTON was at their head, of undue partiality to Great Britain; But success was the consequence. That charge has never been brought against its present rulers, and never will. Happy would it have been for our country, if they had not always exhausted their ingenuity in multiplying obstacles against the adjustment of the difficulties between us and England.

If foreign nations have an interest in cultivating friendship with the United States, it is, because, that friendship is in some respect or other,

advantageous to them. And on what account, sir, is our friendship advantageous to them. On account (I answer) of our commerce Well, sir, Great Britain exists by commerce; and the benefit of ours she cannot have, unless we are in a state of friendship. Her interest then (and no one doubts she is much governed by that) will always induce her to seek that friendship for the sake of that commerce. Indeed, sir, the very laying of your embargo was on the ground that your commerce was essential to the existence of Great Britain. She will, therefore, on the one hand not throw it away lightly. But on the other, she will not purchase it with disgrace; she will not sacrifice her independence to obtain it. And this our administration knew very well; and on the knowledge of this I fear they have acted.

Sir! The gentlemen from the eastern states have told you, and I have no doubt told you truly, of the dreadful condition of the people in that section of the Union. Those from the south have represented to you the deplorable condition of the tobacco, and rice, and cotton countries. Nor have those of the middle states been wanting in lively descriptions of the sufferings of their constituents. And the gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. Williams] has with great ability depicted the distresses of the people of England; all resulting from the suspension of our commerce. Now, sir, what does all this prove? Why, simply this: that if both countries suffer so much from this suspension of our commerce; both are deeply interested in its restoration. And of course that the present state of things is an unnatural one; growing out of artificial causes. And for that reason a state of things which wise and honest men could easily change. It was from this very cause, that it was so easily changed in former times. And on account of differences growing out of the commercial spirit of the two nations, and the animosity which the revolutionary war had called forth, we are now engaged in a contest in which each is to evince his fortitude by depriving himself of the mutual benefits resulting from an amicable intercourse. And if neither is to give out before he feels it impossible to exist without the other, there will never be an end of the contest. We know that this country *can* hold out forever, and we ought to know that Great Britain can do the same; and must, sir, if from no other consideration, yet from this, that we must not be encouraged in the notion that she cannot exist without us.

I have intimated my opinion, sir, that G. Britain has all along been induced to believe, that it was the policy of our administration, to be in dispute with her; and that they have been only solicitous to veil their true object from the American people. Such, sir, is my own opinion, and therefore I will not hesitate to declare it. I shall give my reasons for it, and if I am incorrect, shall be extremely pleased to see my arguments refuted. For I entreat gentlemen to be assured that I am not more desirous of affording light to them, than I am to receive it from them.

The proof in support of my position, derived from the correspondence on the affair of the Chesapeake, is to my mind conclusive. The people of the United States, viewing it as the authorised act of the British government, broke forth into the most ardent execrations. There was not a heart, sir, which did not feel all, that the warmest could feel. What has become of the spirit of that period? Whither has it fled? And why has it subsided? Why are its murmurings heard no where but in the war speeches of gentlemen on this floor?— Sir, the reason is very simple. When remonstrances upon the subject were made to the British government, and indeed before that, they abandoned the principle upon which alone the outrage, if it had been authorised, could have proceeded. Nay, they declared, unasked, unsolicited, that the principle had never been contended for by them. There was therefore no danger of a repetition of the outrage, and our people settled down into quiet from a sense of security.

But let us review the negotiations, to which the event itself gave birth— for we can derive from them a perfect knowledge of the temper and character of our government.

The first intimation received in England of this unfortunate occurrence, was by the English government itself. And before our minister knew any thing of it, Mr. Canning gave him the information, in a manner evincing the most friendly disposition, and the most perfect willingness to make the most ample reparation. I do not desire to be understood to say, that the British entertain any friendship for us, sir. They have little cause for that, for friendship to be friendship must be mutual. But a sense of interest must always induce them to desire an immediate commercial intercourse with us.

To minds which are not wholly poisoned, to those who do not believe that all virtue and patriotism consists in utterly hating G. Britain, as to believe she can do no right, even when her interest should induce her; to all candid men, sir, it must be plain, that at the outset at least, the British minister did all that we could have expected or desired.

Mr. Monroe in a note dated July 29, not having then heard from his government, tells Mr. Canning, that "by accounts which are entitled to full confidence, it appears, that the Leopard attacked the Chesapeake, *with a view to assert and enforce the unfounded and the most unjustifiable pretensions to search for deserters.*" And after detailing the circumstances, and though he reminds Mr. Canning of "other examples of great indignity and outrage," he goes on to say, very properly and very honestly, "but it is improper to mingle *them*, with the *present* more serious cause of complaint." He then proceeds to demand a frank disavowal of the principle and the punishment of the officer. On the third of August, Mr. Canning replies, that "his majesty neither does nor has at any time, maintained the pretension of a right to search ships of war, in the national service of any state for deserters." And that if the attack "shall appear to have rested on the simple and unqualified assertion of that pretension, his majesty has no difficulty in disavowing that, and will have no difficulty in manifesting his displeasure at the conduct of his officers." And then he concludes with agreeing with Mr. Monroe, that other causes of complaint should not be involved in the present question, regretting that allusions should be made to them at all.

Both ministers then harmonized in the opinion that the subject of the outrage should in the negotiation be kept as single, as in its indignity and enormity, it was solitary. And if it had been so kept single—if other topics of complaint had not been "mingled" with it, by our administration, to prevent adjustment, ample reparation, I have no doubt, would long ago have been received for it. Sir, let me entreat gentlemen to look at this part of the correspondence once more. Mr. Monroe calls on the British government for a disavowal. There is not a moment's hesitation in making it. Not only the act itself was at once disavowed, but the declaration was spontaneously made, that the pretension never existed. Even Mr Monroe himself, in his letter to the secretary of state, of the 4th of August, says that Mr. Canning's reply "may be considered as conceding essentially *the point desired.*" Let it be remembered that as yet Mr. Monroe has received no instructions from our executive on this subject. And if every man felt a confidence, and a pleasure at the certain prospect of healing the wounds his country's honor had received; and of dissipating the gloomy apprehensions, which he well knew, disturbed and kindled to wrath his high minded countrymen, our minister at London was the man. But he was ignorant of the subtle policy of the cabinet at home, as he was confounded at the intelligence contained in Mr. Canning's note of the 8th of August. He is in that note, and it would seem, for the first time, informed of the proclamation prohibiting British armed vessels from entering our ports. And Mr. Canning very properly requests to be informed "whether it is the intention of the government of the United States to carry into effect the measures stated in the proclamation of the president, without requiring or waiting for an explanation on the part of the British government, with respect to the late unfortunate affair upon which the determination to resort to these measures is *professed* to be founded."

This question, sir, though very pithy, is one which the proclamation would necessarily draw out. Its plain English is this: "do you mean to ask for reparation, or do you mean to take reparation into your own hands by this retaliating measure? Do you mean to rely upon the disposition of this government to do you justice (and which you know them to have declared unasked) or do you mean to force us to do you justice? We do justice sometimes; but never on compulsion." The point of this enquiry Mr. Monroe evaded by saying he had no information from his government on the subject. He, it seems, did not exactly comprehend the object of the enquiry; for in another letter to the secretary of state of August 14th, he could not conceive "why it should be made, if some unfriendly measure, such as an embargo, was not intended." In that letter also, as well as in the one of August 4th, he speaks of the existence of a strong war party in England, and he was therefore—peace being really and truly *his* object—induced to adopt the most pacific course possible.

The 7th of September put an end to all Mr. Monroe's dreams. He had now received instructions from his government. If the information of the president's proclamation had shaken his hopes of success, these instructions extinguished them. The application for redress came to England not only with an offensive proclamation on its back, but encumbered with a condition that that redress should not be received unless the subject of impressments was arranged at the same time! A subject, sir, which years had been wasted in vain to attempt to arrange. Hear the secretary himself! and let gentlemen say whether such satisfaction was either reasonably to be demanded, or expected. If they say it was, they say more in favor of the desire of Great Britain to do us justice than I shall ever do. Before I proceed let me cast one glance more at this proclamation. Could it form, could it be intended to form part of a specific, sincere system of gaining reparation? No. It was creating a new ground of dispute instead of leaving the old one *single*. If the cabinet had intended to pursue pacific measures, they should have pursued them, and them only; or if coercive, the latter alone. A system partly pacific and partly hostile is always a miserable one. It is always wise to get rid of one quarrel before you create another. One is enough at one time, and he who is ever getting into new quarrels, by way of accommodating old ones, may be as certain as our administration are of never coming to a friendly conclusion about any. But he who loads his demands of reparation as the secretary did, cannot but pant for ill success—The secretary, in his letter to Mr. Monroe of July 6th, 1807, instructs him to insist on a "formal disavowal of the deed and restoration of the four seamen to the ship from whence they were taken as things of course and indispensable. As a security for the future, an entire abolition of impressments from vessels under the flag of the United States, if not already arranged, is also to make an indispensable part of the *satisfaction!*" That is, another and a distinct matter, already proved, incapable of arrangement, must be first adjusted before he would condescend to receive satisfaction for the specific outrage on the Chesapeake. And not only must that matter be first adjusted, but in the very words of the secretary, "it *must be* on terms compatible with the instructions" formerly given on the subject. We will not receive satisfaction for this horrible outrage, unless our own terms be yielded us, in relation to another very difficult point "*as part*"—It was a strange idea, sir—"*as part, an indispensable part of that satisfaction!*"

On such terms, I venture to assert, no compromise was, because none could possibly be expected. I will put a question to gentlemen. When Mr. Monroe was instructed by the cabinet to make the adjustment of the subject of impressments, "*an indispensable part of the satisfaction*," for the attack on the Chesapeake, could it be done with any other expectation, any other view, than that the reparation affected to be pursued should never come at them? Conceding, for the sake of argument, that the terms demanded by our government in relation to impressments were just, had it not been proved that on these terms an adjustment could not be effected?—Mr. Monroe, previous to the receipt of his instructions, had paved the way

for almost certain redress for the outrage on the Chesapeake. But our cabinet well knew that so surely as the water flows down the stream, so surely could the affair of the Chesapeake never be settled by the mode they pursued. No, sir, there never was, and I am afraid never will be, a sincere desire in the administration, for any thing but difficulty and dispute and war with England. But for this, not only the unfortunate affair of the Chesapeake, but every other matter in controversy might long ago have been settled, much to the satisfaction, and more to the prosperity of both countries.

I cannot but compassionate Mr. Monroe for the situation in which he was now placed.—Our poor minister having pursued a plain and certain policy—having gained the assent of the British minister to his opinion that this affair should be kept single ; was suddenly obliged to eat his words ; he was obliged not only to mingle other matters with this all important affair, but to mingle with it one, which his own experience convinced him placed adjustment utterly beyond the reach of hope.

I am now, sir, safe in advancing as an incontrovertible fact, that before the proclamation was known in England, the government of that country had shewn every disposition to do us justice, at least in the affair of the Chesapeake. They had declared themselves innocent of all participation in the act ; they had promised the punishment of the officer ; or in more courtly language "his majesty's displeasure." But the proclamation arrives. Immediately the tone is changed. You have taken (say they) reparation into your own hands. You have studied to prevent the people of your country from seeing that we are capable of doing justice voluntarily. We will not make the reparation, before this proclamation, which we consider a hostile act, is taken off. But in that case we will give the most ample satisfaction.

The secretary is a wise man. He had very distinctly foreseen that on the proclamation the negotiation would split. But the secretary is moreover a prudent and a provident man, and therefore, lest the desire of peace and commercial intercourse with this country which its interest dictates to England, might induce the ministry to disregard this obstruction to reparation, he, to be more secure, fortified himself with another which could not be possibly overcome. "The matter of impressments must be settled beforehand." That he knew to be impossible. Less prudence, however, would have been sufficient. For although Mr. Canning, in his letter to Mr. Monroe, of Sept. 23d, 1807, says that "it is a matter of regret that you should have been instructed to annex to the demand of reparation for the attack of the Leopard upon the Chesapeake, any proposition whatever respecting the search for British seamen in merchant vessels ; a subject which is wholly unconnected with the case of the Leopard and the Chesapeake, and which can only tend to complicate and embarrass a discussion, in itself of sufficient difficulty and importance ;" although in his letter of the 29th of the same month, he says that the British government "is willing to look to one subject only, the late aggression, and to provide for it ;" yet it is evident from the instructions given to Mr. Rose, that the proclamation would of itself have been a sufficient obstruction to the approach of reparation.

Although G. Britain appears to have been determined not to do even justice, while there was any appearance of her having been forced to it ; yet she sent a special minister to this country to offer atonement. That minister, soon after his arrival, had an interview with Mr. Madison, in which he stated to the secretary, that he was "*expressly precluded* by his instructions from entering upon any negotiation for the adjustment of the differences arising from the encounter of his majesty's ship Leopard and the frigate of the U. States the Chesapeake, as long as the proclamation should be in force."

Previous to the actual arrival of Mr. Rose, it had been understood here that he was coming out as a special envoy, for the express and sole purpose of making satisfaction for the outrage committed in our waters. If I

am incorrect, sir, in this assertion, I hope some gentleman will set me right, for I desire to travel along the great high way of truth and fact. Under a knowledge of this fact then, the president recommended the laying of an embargo *ostensible* for the purpose "of keeping in safety our essential resources," but in *reality*, as in the course of the discussion of the embargo bill has been asserted by our embargo gentleman from Virginia and another from Pennsylvania, to operate on G. Britain. And Mr. Rose on his arrival was actually cheered by this new evidence of the sincere desire (I believe that is the slang, sir) of our administration to restore and cultivate the friendly relations so important to both countries! Our cabinet seems to have been afraid that the proclamation and the demand concerning impressments, with the affair of the Chesapeake would not be a sufficient protection against Mr. Rose's importunities to give us reparation. To be perfectly secure therefore, they barricaded themselves by this omnipotent embargo. And now I have no doubt Mr. Madison thought that if the special envoy could force his satisfaction upon the administration, in spite of all these fortifications the very deuce must be in it. Mr. Rose then arrives---makes the disclosure of his instructions which I have already mentioned, and of which he reminds Mr. Madison in his letter of January 20, 1808. Withdraw your proclamation, so that the reparation we make (such is the substance of the offer) may have all the merit of being voluntary, and I promise you, the reparation shall be unobjectionable. But while that proclamation continues in force, the dignity of my government forbids a disclosure of what that reparation shall consist of. Mr. Madison having now ascertained with precision the instructions which tied down the special envoy, to a defined and prescribed course, from which he could not depart, assumes all at once the appearance of great mildness, abandons the high tone---comes down from his lofty demands, and that the adjustment of the subject of impressment, shall not form "part, an indispensable part of the satisfaction."---nay, he is so little obstinate even about the proclamation, that in his reply of the 8th of March he says that the president, "adhering to the *moderation* by which he has been *invariably guided*, and *anxious* to rescue the two nations from the circumstances under which an abortive issue to your mission necessarily places them, has authorized me *in the event of your disclosing the terms of reparation* which you believe will be satisfactory; and on its appearance that they are so, to consider this evidence of the justice of his Britannic majesty as a *pledge* for an effectual interposition with respect to all the abuses against which the proclamation was meant to provide, and to proceed to concert with you a revocation of that act bearing the same date with the act of reparation to which the United States are entitled." This was diplomatic skill indeed! If *you*, Mr. Rose, will do, what *we* very well know you cannot do, we will abandon our high ground. Only be so good as to perform impossibilities---do what you yourself told us you are forbidden to do---and we will complete the miracle by giving fact in evidence to prove our desire of being in amity with your country. Who after this very ingenious and honest offer of our cabinet will dare to question its sincerity?---Who will dare to deny that they sought, since they proved their desire to obtain, satisfaction by pursuing a course so well calculated to obtain it! Alas! sir, all that can be said of it is, that they kept their original object steadily in view; but the frankness with which Mr. Rose had communicated his instructions, enabled them to make a very specious offer, and which was only made with a view to their own popularity. For however plausible the offer might be, it was no less certain of being unproductive of good, than their former extravagant conduct had been. They were still secured as effectually as ever against the intrusion of reparation.

But it has been said there was a point of honor involved in the question. If that has indeed been so, the case would be varied. But let us examine it, and I venture to assert there was no such thing in it.

The Secretary in his letter of the 6th of June, already referred to, has said the proclamation was a mere matter of precaution, and

could not be considered as a hostile act. And he tells Mr. Monroe, "the scope of the proclamation will signify to you, that the president has yielded to the presumption, that the hostile act of the British commander did *not pursue the intention of his government.*"—— These let it be remembered are Madison's own words. At the outset then he, as well as the president, did not believe the attack on the Chesapeake pursued the intentions of the British government. And believing it did not, the proclamation could never have been justified as a hostile act. It could be defended only on the ground of its being a precautionary one. And on that ground, as has been seen Mr. Madison did place it in this letter of June 6th. I will not at this time say, sir, whether the issuing the proclamation for the purpose of preserving tranquility in the ports and harbours of the U. States, was a necessary, or a political step; I will not stop now to examine whether this was the real or the ostensible motive. But I will prove that the keeping in force that proclamation, if it was in truth, merely a measure of precaution, was after the disclosure of Mr. Rose's instructions, the height of folly, to say nothing worse of it.

The president was willing to withdraw the proclamation, if Mr. Rose would disclose *what* were the terms of reparation he was instructed to offer, and if those terms should be satisfactory, in that case, such disclosure of such satisfactary terms would be a *pledge*, given by Great Britain that there should be no *recurrence* of abuses. And then the withdrawing of the proclamation, and the act of reparation should bear one date. No, Sir, in all this time from June 6th 1807, to March 5th 1808, the proclamation had been represented and justified by our government, on the mere plea that it was necessary as a precautionary measure—that it was necessary to the maintenance of the tranquility and security of our harbors. Whenever therefore the danger in this respect ceased, the cause of the proclamation ceased—and of course, the proclamation itself might well cease too.—Whether it should continue or not was not a point of honor; it was a question of calculation merely—and therefore ought to have been continued or discontinued, as upon sound calculations one course or the other should promise most advantage. But surely no point of honor was to be preserved by keeping it on, nor was to be sacrificed by taking it off. Before I looked into the correspondence, I had given into the general idea that the government had acted right; for I had understood that they persisted in the proclamation, because in some way or other (I had like most others not understood how,) their honor or that of the nation required it. But a calm examination, in which I did not permit my feelings to run away with my judgment, has completely convinced me that there is certainly no point of honor in the matter. When Mr. Rose, therefore, disclosed his instructions, which prevented him from negotiating while the proclamation was in force, the only question to be decided by our cabinet was, will the withdrawing it be more dangerous to our harbors than advantageous in promoting a restoration of harmony? Is it, *on calculation*, best to wit-

draw it? It does appear to me, Sir, that the queſtion admitted of no doubt. The proclamation at the outſet poſſeſſed no magic force—it could not keep a fleet out of our harbours. Whether, therefore, it was in exiſtence or not, the phyſical power of the interdicted ſhips to enter, remained preciſely the ſame. Our veſſels might have been attacked, and our defenceleſs ſea port towns might have been battered down about our ears with the ſame facility as if the proclamation had never been iſſued.

But the departure of the ſquadron which annoyed us was prior to —certainly cotemporary with, the arrival of Mr. Roſe in this country. There were, during the winter, no other Britiſh veſſels off our coaſt. If then the proclamation could by ſome ſecret charm keep out of the harbors veſſels on the coaſt, yet as none were on the coaſt, its ſuſpenſion for a few days could work no practical miſchief. And there could therefore be no ſubſtantial argument, if in truth it was what the ſecretary himſelf declares, "a mere meaſure of precaution," in favour of keeping it on, as an obſtruction to that ſatisfactory reparation which Mr. Roſe declared himſelf ready to make as ſoon as it was removed. It follows, therefore, inevitably, either that the adminiſtration has deceived the nation as to the cauſe and object of the proclamation: or that if in this reſpect they have ſpoken the truth, their calculations have been ſilly and whimſical. Whatever be the truth, the wound our country's honor has received from this outrageous attack, has been ſuffered to feſter till it has grown old and ſeems now as incurable, as it is unhealed.

I will preſent this ſubject in antother view. If the proclamation had been withdrawn, Mr. Roſe was to have diſcloſed the terms of reparation. Suppoſe in that event, that theſe terms had not been ſatisfactory. The proclamation might have been ſuſpended for perhaps three days. And will any one ſay that the ſuſpenſion of this wonder-working inſtrument for three days would have endangered the tranquility of our ports and harbors? For gentlemen will ſee, that as ſoon as the reparation was decided to be unſatisfactory, the proclamation might have been revived.

I will detain the houſe, sir, but little longer on this ſubject. This matter has preſented itſelf to my mind ſo clear, that I have had little difficulty in preſenting it in a ſtrong light before the houſe. And when gentlemen come to anſwer me, and I hope they will, I intreat them to anſwer theſe arguments.—I have endeavoured to convey them in as plain a manner as I could, for I wiſh to ſee them refuted, if they are falſe.—I acknowledge my obligations to the houſe forhearing me ſo patiently. I know ſir, a great many fine things may be ſaid about honor and independence and all that. But if gentlemen anſwer me I muſt beg them to forego the temptation of theſe brilliant topics, and to anſwer my arguments.

If the honor of the country ſir, had required an adherence to the proclamation, I ſhould have been among the laſt to condemn the adminiſtration. But the ſecretary himſelf, yielded this ground when he declared the proclamation to be a mere meaſure of precaution. And if there was after that, any point of honor in the

caſe, it was not by perſiſting in a courſe which could be productive of no good.

But the voice of the country, ſir, has decided that Great Britain has done all that could be expected of her to repair the injury committed by the Leopard. And it is therefore in vain to attempt to raiſe a war ſpirit by empty declamations on that topic.

Sir, that the Britiſh miniſtry and the Britiſh nation are at this moment unfriendly to the United States, I will not deny, for I do not doubt it. It would be ſtrange indeed, if it were otherwiſe.—Our people ſir, nay, even the members of this houſe have had their ears ſo dinned, with the cry of Britiſh enmity, that we have at length ſo acted as to make enemies of thoſe who at firſt felt no hoſtility towards us—It was impoſſible they ſhould feel any. As well might the merchant be the enemy of his beſt cuſtomer—But let gentlemen lay their hand upon their hearts: let the people of this country look into their own boſoms and ſay whether they find there no feeling of enmity towards Great Britain—no relics of ancient animoſity—nothing of that ſcrutinizing, unforgiving, jealous hoſtility, which they have been working into a belief that Great Britain feels towards us. After ſuch a great revolution as that which has been accompliſhed in this country, during which the leading ſtatesmen found it eſſential to ſucceſs, to keep the public exaſperation at the higheſt point poſſible, it is not to be wondered at, that much of the old feeling ſhould remain—but it will be moſt ſincerely to be deplored, if this feeling ſhould overcome the good ſenſe of the nation.

I will not deny, nor am I ſurpriſed, that Great Britain is now endeavouring to do us all the harm in her power ſhort of commencing actual war upon us. Nor can I bring my mind to believe that retaliation upon France was either the ſole or the principal cauſe of her orders in council. She knew theſe orders muſt, and I cannot doubt but ſhe intended they ſhould operate principally upon this country. And I will go farther ſir—I will ſay that in iſſuing them ſhe has done no more than what our adminiſtration has made her do—and is delighted at her having done, becauſe it brings them ſo much nearer to the accompliſhment of their favorite object—*a war with Great Britain!*

Sir, I am not ſurpriſed at ſeeing Great Britain attempting to do us harm. That attempt is the natural reſult of our own ſyſtem.—The French decrees were not the cauſe of, but merely a plauſible pretext for it. By paſſing the non-importation act the government commenced a ſyſtem of commercial warfare againſt Great Britain. They meant by it to make her do that which without compulſion, ſhe was unwilling to do. What is the reply? A counteracting meaſure of commercial warfare. The matter of impreſſments and the carrying trade could not be ſettled to our ſatisfaction. G. Britain would not do us juſtice willingly. We meant then to coerce her to our terms; and accordingly the non-importation act was paſſed. If not for the purpoſe of coercion, for what purpoſe was it paſſed, ſir? And being paſſed, what was Great Britain to do? Either, on the one hand to ſay, this taliſman is irreſiſtable, and therefore, I yield to its power; or on the other. I cannot yield to it. But if

you can paſs non importation acts I can reply to them by orders in council; if you can injure my manufactures and commerce (and you certainly can) I can ſuppreſs your trade. Sir, reſiſtance to the meaſure by which we attempted to coerce neceſſarily produced theſe conſequences. And "the deſire of his majeſty to do all in his power to reſtore to the commerce of the United States its wonted activity," expreſſed ſo ſarcaſtically in Mr. Canning's letter, was merely a better way of telling us that his majeſty was playing our own game back upon us; that he could make his paper ſhot tell as diſtinctly as we could ours and rather more ſo. Yes ſir, it will not, it cannot be denied that the non-importation act was a hoſtile one, becauſe intended for coercion. The Britiſh government always viewed it ſo. And my poſition is that ever ſince the paſſage of that act we have been at war with her; not the old faſhioned ſort of war; but a new fangled, philoſophical kind of commercial war! We thought we played a ſtrong card, and now we are outrageous becauſe our antagoniſt has been able to play above us! Great Britain it turns out, is not only able to reſiſt the force of your ſyſtem, but to make you feel the diſtreſſes incident to a re-action of that ſyſtem. With the experience of its effect it ought inſtantly to be abandoned. It originated in paſſion, miſcalculation, and imbecility, and ſhould not be purſued. We were in affluence and proſperity when it commenced. Where are we now?

A gentleman from Maryland (Mr. K.) has taken great pains to prove that the embargo is the cauſe of the preſent low prices of produce. Another gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. Williams) has aſſerted, no leſs ſtoutly, that the orders in council are the true cauſe. If the laſt aſſertion be correct, it is a very unfortunate one for the policy of the embargo ſyſtem; for, ſir, it yields the ground to the adverſary—it acknowledges that ſhe has the beſt of the battle—that ſhe has beat us at our own weapons. And yet inſtead of diſcontinuing the "unprofitable conteſt," we are called upon to plunge deeper and deeper into it. I have been aſtoniſhed to find thoſe gentlemen who talk ſo much of the patriotiſm of our own people, unwilling to believe that there is patriotiſm in Great Britain too. If we are willing to bear, ſo are they. If we would ſacrifice every thing to our country, ſo would they too, whenever it becomes a queſtion, which ſhall hold out longeſt. And, ſir, it has come to this already. Much ſpirit and acrimony is mixed with the conteſt. Put the caſe to an Engliſhman, will you, to regain the American commerce, confeſs that that commerce is eſſential to your exiſtence? Will you conſent that yielding to the embargo and non-importation and non intercourſe ſyſtem, your government ſhall accede to demands which otherwiſe they would not accede to? What would one of thoſe Engliſhmen, of whoſe pride and haughtineſs we have heard ſo much on this floor, ſay to it? Well, ſir, if you cannot then bend the Engliſh government to your terms, and if, inſtead of making their people your inſtruments to act upon the government, you excite an unconquerable ſpirit of reſiſtance even in them, how is the embargo to be operative? How can you hope

it will bring your enemy at your feet? And if it did not in the end produce this effect, all our ſufferings under this delightful experiment, will have been to no purpoſe.

Let me detain the houſe one moment to enquire what is the character of the war, which is now carried on in Europe? It is on one ſide a war for conqueſt, for univerſal dominion—on the other for ſelf preſervation. At the commencement of the French revolution it had the ſame character. France fought for ſelf preſervation—the combined powers for conqueſt.—But the parties have changed ſides. I take a delight ſir, in remembering that the ſame feelings which governed me then I yet preſerve. I wiſh neither power to be able to break down the other I fear the power of either, when the other ſhall have been broken down. Therefore, and not becauſe I think more juſtice or kindneſs is to be expected from one than the other, I cannot but hope that Great Britain may maintain her ground. Yes, ſir, that country is indeed the barrier between Bonaparte and univerſal empire, not becauſe her morals have undergone any change for the better ſince ſhe combined her force with the powers of the continent—but from neceſſity, from fortune of war. And ſhe is the only power which can hope ſucceſsfully to reſiſt the ſtrides of France. She is the defence of the world! Not becauſe ſhe cares much about the world but becauſe in defending herſelf ſhe neceſſarily protects all others, who ſtand behind her. They cannot be reached, until ſhe is firſt broken down. But that done the power of France overwhelms the univerſe. And, ſir, ſhould we be then more ſafe than we are now? Should we be then more ſafe when the Tyger of the land ſhall mount the Shark of the ocean, and having ſwept the ſea, aſſail our ſhores with a rapacity unſatiated and an ambition incapable of repoſe? Let it not be believed. The only republic which has eſcaped the fury of him who has ſubverted the republics of all countries—even of his own, the ruins of which are the baſis of his imperial throne.—No, ſir—indeed we could hardly eſcape the Great Deſtroyer. I rely much on the patriotiſm, the bravery and the perſeverance of my countrymen—but I hope they may never be under the neceſſity of meeting Napoleon, when having broken down Britain, he is borne upon her navy to the ſhores of our own country.

But I have been drawn inſenſibly from my courſe. It is a war of ambition. And what is the part which we take in it? Have we, ſir, not thrown in our whole weight to aid and render effectual the preſſure by which France meant to cruſh her enemy? Have we not done all that we could, when Engliſh commerce was excluded from the continent of Europe, to exclude it from the United States alſo? Napoleon, finding that he could not conquer England by force, had reſorted to the expedient of cloſing up the world againſt her commerce—well knowing that commerce was her life blood. The continent of Europe was ſubject to his nod. No potentate dared to diſobey. America was ſtill open, and ſtill free; and we cloſed America too: America ſubſerved to the utmoſt extent of her means the French policy! We did all that France knowing our means, could have reaſonably aſked; for we did all

we could to deſtroy the commerce of England, although in doing it we ſacrificed the proſperity of our country! We paſſed the embargo act—an act which all the enemies of Great-Britain rejoice in—which the French miniſter eulogizes and Napoleon applauds. If we intend to aid France, we could have done no more than we have done. If we meant to coerce Britain to our own terms, we have exhauſted our means in a ſingle effort.

But what have we done to bring France to juſtice, to coerce her? What ſtrong meaſure has been adopted to compel her to reſcind her decrees? At the outſet was a ſingle ſtep of dignified and impoſing character taken? But gentlemen ſay, the decrees were not immediately enforced, they were not immediately acted upon—and there was no cauſe either for reſentment or alarm. Becauſe the orders in council were expected from Great-Britain, the embargo was neceſſary; and this makes no little figure in the liſt of arguments in its ſupport. But the French decrees, though promulgated, were to be conſidered as a mere joke until they were acted upon! Let me remind gentlemen of the alien law. That, though an act of their own government—though never acted upon, was long a topic of moſt brilliant declamation. And thoſe whom that law terrified almoſt into madneſs, were perfectly tranquil under a decree violating not only the laws of nations, but the more ſacred obligation of treaty. But the adminiſtration, forſooth, flattered itſelf the decree of Berlin would never be enforced! that it had iſſued only in ſport, and was as harmleſs as any of our paper ſhot. Little could they know of Napoleon who thought ſo, and little could they wiſh to know of him. The nation was made to look on with compoſure—the edge of its indignation was taken off, & the good underſtanding between the two republics continued. An embargo on the trade to France was not thought of—our merchants were not even warned of their danger. But at length the decree, and more than the decree of Berlin, was enforced. Engliſh orders in council were expected—but what they would be no one could exactly tell. Inſtantly, however, appears the neceſſity of an embargo—an embargo to coerce England, as was at the time declared on this floor. And not until this ſeſſion has it been thought expedient to let off ſome hard words at France—for words is all we have uſed towards her—throughout there is manifeſted an anxious ſolicitude to conciliate France on the one hand, and on the other to irritate and render incurable the wounds we have received from Britain.

You passed the Embargo to bring Britain to your feet. The praises of this legislative chain were rung through the country; its magical power was the topic of every administration print, and for a while the people believed—The "credo quia impossibile est," was never more devoutly acted upon. But twelve months have elapsed, and what has it produced? The mountain has been in labour, and I look in vain even for the mouse. The Embargo however being passed, did the administration wait until G. Britain cast herself at their feet imploring relief from the pressure of this intolerable measure? No, Sir,—after some time, a little time too,

wondering why she did not begin to groan under the burthen, the administration (taking them at their own word) sent a messenger to England to enquire if she was not pretty well tired of the Embargo? That if she was, they were. If you will quit, we will, was the purport of this message. And what was the result of this wise project? What might have been expected. The authors of this irresistably coercive measure, did play their parts most clumsily. The British minister could not doubt they were coming to, and no man in his situation would have thought differently. If the offer made to Great-Britain was fairly and sincerely made, its rejection only proves, that a more miserable plan of coercion than the Embargo could not have been devised. And, sir, highly praised as this specific has been, I much doubt whether the prayer of the petitions on your table would not have been complied with, if the administration could have done so without acknowledging their folly and sacrificing their popularity.

But as to the proposition, and to speak of it in the sober sadness it deserves—What answer did it receive? Your minister was told that if the orders in council should be revoked it would appear to the world as if the British government had, by the embargo, been forced to abandon them. We cannot therefore consent. Since we have gone on so far, we will shew to France and to you that we cannot, we do not even fear to be subdued in this way—the experiment may be as properly made now as at any time, and you may make it till you are satisfied of its inefficacy.

If sir, our administration had been sincerely disposed for peace, and acting wisely, had rescinded the proclamation, and repealed the embargo and non-importation acts, and then said now do us justice, the interest which Great-Britain, as well as this country has in the restoration of amicable commercial intercourse, would have left no chance for refusal. And if she had refused, the American people would have rallied round their government, and I know, sir, that that portion of them with whom I act, forgetting how they had been persecuted, would have sacrificed their resentment at the shrine of their country's independence.

Sir, is it not true that the national animosity towards G. Britain has been so much nourished in this country that it is a test of patriotism even with the administration? It could not therefore be reasonably expected, that the British ministry could have any confidence in mere intimations of returning good will. Nor could any calculation be made on the impartiality or spirit of an administration which has discovered no indignation at the Berlin decree—whose entire resentment has been directed to one of the belligerents only, while its co-operation with the other was manifest and intended to be decisive.

That such were throughout the real feelings of the British Government—nay, that such is the fact can hardly be doubted, by any one who will peruse dispassionately Mr. Canning's letter to Mr. Pinckney of September 23. "If (says he) the embargo is considered a measure of hostility, his majesty cannot consent to buy it off." He could not consistently with diplomatick decorum

tell Mr. Pinckney in plain terms, Your government has all along attempted to deceive, when they represented this as a mere municipal regulation, for municipal purposes; although he might have brought the speeches of the members of this house in support of the position—But his putting the case even hypothetically, lets you at once into the knowledge of his opinions concerning the motives and the temper of our government.—And he fastens upon him the charge of duplicity, with great civility indeed, but most logically, by putting the case the other way. "*If, as it has been more generally represented by the government of the United States*, it is only to be considered as an innocent municipal regulation, which affects none but the United States themselves: and in which no foreign states have any concern, his majesty does not conceive that he has the right or the pretension to make any complaint of it, and he has made none. But in *this* light there appears not only, no necessity but no assignable relation, between the repeal by the United States of a voluntary self restriction, and the surrender by his majesty of his right of retaliation against his enemies." Probably I shall not make Mr. Canning's meaning more plain, but it is important that his true meaning should be correctly understood.

If your embargo is hostile, inasmuch as it is designed to be coercive, then we will not "buy it off;" you may make the experiment of its efficacy thoroughly.

If it is "an innocent municipal regulation" solely for mere municipal domestic purposes as to yourselves, and which was never intended to operate upon us, what "reciprocity" is there in offering that if we will give up our retaliation on the enemy, you will give up a measure, which you say does not concern us? But your very offer, could go only on the ground that your embargo was injurious to us, that you so considered and from the first intended it; and hence it results that you always misrepresented its real character.—We are brought therefore to the first point.—Your very proposal leaves no doubt that as it is now, so at first it was, a measure of coercion. And if it was so intended originally, we consider it of the first importance to our country, that the futility of this notion of coercing us by this kind of war in disguise—this commercial war, should be proved—for then it will never be repeated.—Though we can stand it, yet it is injurious to us. The greater therefore is the wisdom of that policy which determines us to give your system since it is commenced, a complete trial.....For if it fail, as fail it must, we need never apprehend a repetition of it. For the repetition, though not ruinous, must be always inconvenient and unprofitable to us.

If gentlemen will accompany me a little farther in this letter, the truth will be still more evident.

"The government (adds Mr. C.) of the United States is not to be informed"—(that is, they know very well, and always did know very well,) "that the Berlin decree was the practical commencement of an attempt not merely to check or impair the prosperity of Great Britain, but utterly to annihilate her existence

through the ruin of her commercial prosperity. They know that in this attempt almost all the powers of the European continent have been compelled, more or less to co-operate. I entreat gentlemen to attend to what follows...."And your government know that the American embargo, *though most assuredly not intended for that end*, by some unfortunate concurrence of circumstances, *without any hostile intentions*," (Sir, the sarcasm is most severe,) "the American embargo *did come in aid* of the blockade of the European continent, precisely at the very moment, when, if that blockade could have succeeded *at all*, this interposition of the American government would have contributed to its success." If I might be indulged once more in a paraphrase, I would represent Mr. Canning as saying, "your government know that the embargo did come in aid of the system by which France meant to destroy us.—Allowing your cabinet intellect, and allowing they knew what they were about, we must suppose they intended to aid France in her plan to destroy us.....And we are the more certain of this, because the embargo was passed at a moment when if the French plan could have succeeded at all, your "interposition" would have given us the finishing blow.

Such, sir, is the plain English of Mr. Canning's letter; such, too, is the real truth; and it is time, high time, that the people of the United States should understand that the enmity is not exclusively on the side of Great Britain. It is all important that they should know that under the plausible pretext of an embargo, "an innocent municipal regulation," their rulers seized upon a critical moment to press upon Great Britain in the only manner they could, and at a time when their hostility would have been effectual most probably, if the Spanish revolution had not intervened.—If we have cause of complaint, as certainly we have, they have much greater. If we have cause to complain of the violence and injustice of their naval commanders—if our resentment has been inflamed to madness by the attack on the Chesapeake, and the murder of Pierce—they can owe us little kindness, when they know that our government threw, at a critical turn, their whole weight into the scale of France.

The whole of this very masterly letter of Mr. Canning, is entitled to most attentive perusal. It is a key which opens to us the secret of the strange and mysterious situation into which we have been brought. It should be carefully read, and that again and again.

I will conclude, however, by soliciting your attention particularly to that part of it in which he says, with a liberality that does him honor, and a sincerity which I cannot doubt, because it is clearly true, on the one hand, "the prosperity of America is essential to the prosperity of Great-Britain." And therefore, on the other, "the strength and power of Great-Britain are not for herself only, but for the world." This, though it has not always been, is now certainly true.

Looking to the future, he observes—"when those adjustments shall take place, to which, though unfortunately not practicable

at this moment, nor under the conditions prescribed to Mr. Pinkney, the undersigned nevertheless confidently looks forward, it will perhaps be no insecure pledge for the continuance of the good understanding between the two countries, that they will have learnt duly to appreciate each other's friendship, and that it will not hereafter be imputed to Great-Britain, either on the one hand that she envies American industry, as prejudicial to British commerce ; nor on the other hand, that she is *compelled* to *court* an intercourse with America, as *absolutely necessary* to her own existence. His majesty would not hesitate to contribute, *in any manner in his power*, to restore to the commerce of the United States its wonted activity. And if it were *possible* to make any sacrifice for the repeal of the embargo, *without appearing to deprecate it, as a measure of hostility, he* would *gladly have facilitated its removal.*"

One more translation of this diplomatic language and I have done with the letter. I understand Mr. Canning as saying, at some period or other our disputes will be settled ; your people will then be convinced, that if they can injure us in one way, we can injure them as much in another—that it is as impossible that we should regret your prosperity, as it is that a merchant should repine at the wealth of a planter fond of luxury, and his constant customer. But on the other hand, you will not again undertake to quarrel with us under the idea, that we cannot live without you. Still we are willing to acknowledge, that your commerce with us is extremely desirable ; and therefore you will enable us, by relinquishing your coercive system, to restore the intercourse between us, without our appearing to have yielded to that system " without our appearing to deprecate it as a measure of hostility," we will make *any sacrifice*. Relinquish your plan and you shall hear no more of our orders in council.

Yes, Sir ! I do not doubt and I confess I am surprised any one should doubt of the real cause of our difficulties with G. Britain. As our coercive system produced her resistance and retaliation, so would the abandonment of it, restore that commercial intercourse, which is so inseparably connected with our prosperity. And Mr. Canning gives the assurance of it in terms as unequivocal, as under all the circumstances could be possibly expected or reasonably desired

I have said before, and I repeat it again—Valuable, important as our commerce indisputably is to Great-Britain on account of that very value and importance, her ministry cannot and dare not, suffer the present experiment to terminate in a conviction or even a doubt, of its being essential to her existence. If I am understood sir, there cannot but be an end of the hope of coercing Great-Britain to terms, in this way, until she is no longer able to resist us, and she passes under the dominion of France. And then our condition will be fearful indeed ! If we cannot count fairly on the success of the experiment on the one hand and if on the other that state of things which alone can bring success, may plunge us into overwhelming ruin ; our whole system ought to be abandoned.

" The new state of things which has arisen in Europe," the re-

volution in Spain, has had a most unfortunate effect on the success of the embargo experiment, inasmuch as it has enabled G. Britain to incorporate, to identify herself with the Spanish people, and that in both hemispheres. And, sir, that which she has gained, not only enables her to bear up under our embargo, but much of it which we might have had is probably lost to us forever. Sir! I should have risqued much, to secure the friendship of that nation at this time. If as a freeman, and the representative of a free people, I had been inaccessible to the sympathies which all such should feel, for a people deceived and betrayed, rising at length in their might and opposing their whole undivided force, with one great and noble and simultaneous impulse to resist the subjugation attempted by a foreign tyrant: If I could without emotion have witnessed the march of the gloomy host, to "victory or death"—if without concern I could have seen millions of my fellow beings, with unbroken firmness, and an unwavering desperation, "struggling in the storms of fate;" yet at least I should not have been induced by any considerations, to have abandoned the interests of my own country; when the support of those patriotic heroes, was so intimately connected with that interest. But, sir it has so happened, that from the same cause which makes us mourn our departed prosperity, we have suffered England to unite herself with the hardy yemonary of Spain, and to oppose, perhaps for the last time, a bold and formidable front, to the overwhelming power of the conqueror of Europe. If fortunately, sir, instead of following up our chimercial experiment, we had set our trade at liberty, and by sending supplies to Spain, had done all we could to assist in her enfranchisement, by enabling her to hold out in her great and noble and glorious purpose; if we had availed ourselves of this auspicious moment to fasten ourselves upon the affections of an honest and faithful people: not only would our immediate prosperity have been advanced, but we should have bound them to us in a bond of union, strengthened and sanctified by the awful circumstance under which it was formed. Recur, sir, to the services—the assistance which the ill fated monarch of France rendered us in the revolution. What have been their effects upon this people? So great, sir, that the gratitude they excited has been transferred from our benefactor, to his murderers! Because they were Frenchmen! And not even yet, sir, has the sentiment ceased to operate upon the American mind. If then, instead of permitting Great Britain to go on without a competitor, "stealing the hearts of the people of Spain," we had extended to them all the friendly offices in our power; if we had shewn an anxiety to make up in the desire of doing what we lacked in the ability, the name of an American might have sounded in Spain, like that of brother on this great continent. We should have formed a union, founded on the sincerity of fraternal attachment, which would almost have made us one people. But if Spain be able to resist, we have lost an opportunity which will never recur. If her restoration to independence, shall give to her people any new sentiment towards us, it will not be that of gratitude. For judging of

the feelings of the nation, by the apparent indifference of the administration, and the language of its immediate partizans, ignorant that there was in the country a humbled and persecuted band, who loved their own independence too much not to wish it to every brave and virtuous people—they will perhaps never be persuaded that there existed here any thing but ill will towards them. The consequences of such an opinion are such that it is unnecessary to expatiate upon them.

But a gentleman from Georgia (Mr. Troup) in the course of his observations the other day, remarked that perhaps at the very moment he was addressing you, the people of Spain might be emploring mercy at the feet of the conqueror. This presents us with another view of the subject; but a view which ought to have more imperiously coerced our government to the course, which they have neglected. Well sir, let us suppose it. After resisting till their means of resistance have perished; their countrymen, cut up, and murdered, and destroyed, the remnant of the people of Spain receive the yoke. Suppose the triumph of insatiable ambition complete--Behold Joseph Napoleon, after having marched from Bayonne to Madrid, over the dead bodies of the Spaniards amid the groans, and the shrieks and the execration and the despair of the widows and orphans, behold him seated at length, all over covered with human gore, on the throne of Spain. And what then? Can you doubt that the colonies in South America will be from that moment independent? Or do gentlemen know so little of human nature; so little of the Spanish Character, as to think it possible, that the inhabitants of Spanish America, will rush forward, to kiss the Sceptre, which has no ornament but the blood of their brethren? That they will be eager to pollute themselves with the horrible embraces of the murderers of their kindred? No sir, it is impossible.

The moment then, that Spain is conquered, her provinces on this continent become independent—and as things have been managed under the guarantee and in the most cordial alliance with G. Britain. We shall have in them of consequence, hostile and dangerous neighbors; while Great-Britain will monopolize their trade; and if our present difficultics continue, perpetually instigate them to hostility against us. All this might have been prevented, if in relation to Spain only, our government had pursued the proper course. The merchants applied for leave to resume their commerce with Spain, but a deaf ear was turned to them. Disposed as Great-Britain is to do us "harm," she may yet make use of the Spaniards on this continent for that purpose. And though these Spaniards have been long considered as a contemptible, let it be remembered that a nation is always regenerated by a revolution. It assumes in such cases always a new and elevated and fearful character. Let us then beware how we make enemies of this people. Let us do all we can to conciliate their friendship. It is not perhaps even now too late to retrieve the advantages the administration have overlooked; a change of conduct may regain us the affections and friendship which have been unnecessarily lost. And this, sir, is to

be the more desired, when we look forward to what is likely to be the situation of the European continent if Spain is conquered. It will be subject to the will and despotism of Napoleon. It will groan beneath that iron sceptre, in the circuit of whose influence no virtue can live, and every effort of liberty is idle.—The seat of empire is from that moment transferred from this continent—There ignorance, and poverty, and hopeless vassalage will draw on a monotonous existence; or if ever they rise, it will be to be crushed by the irresistable hand of power. Europe impoverished by its long continued wars—and the frequent insurrections to which it will be subject, will no longer be able to cultivate the arts of peace. It will be here then on this regenerated continent they may hope to find repose and protection. Let us not sacrifice the bright prospects before us to a visionary experiment.

It is time, sir, that we should retrace our steps. The course we have been running has produced no good; it certainly can produce none. Yet it seems instead of going back, we are perpetually urged forward. This great measure which was to have restored, secured and extended our commerce, has entirely destroyed it. Satisfied as the administration are of its inefficacy, they seem determined to follow it up by a non-intercourse; and that sir, that is to do wonders indeed! Why will gentlemen suffer themselves to be deceived? The embargo, when it had been twelve months in operation, was itself a non-intercourse to all substantial purposes; for it is very evident that if we cannot send any thing out of the country, we can pay for nothing which is brought into it. The non-intercourse is the old thing after all. It is the old shoe new vamped.

Sir, my heart bleeds for my poor country when I see gentlemen determined to persist in this pernicious course—not a beam of hope brightens the prospect. All is darkness and ruin and misery before us. Is it possible we are not to abandon our feeble system till Great Britain yields? It does indeed seem so sir, for we have been told by a gentleman that when the embargo was laid on, government did, by doing it, give a pledge to the nation that they would persevere until the ends intended were answered. If, sir, the embargo was such a pledge the passing this bill will be a new pledge to the same effect. I warn gentlemen, therefore to be cautius. If the course they are pursuing be indeed a wrong one.. promising no happy result, let them bear in mind, the farther they proceed the more difficult will be their return.

The gentlemen who oppose the system now in operation, have been called upon by the majority to say which they would do.... they have been asked for their substitute for the embargo. And I will confess I have been somewhat surprised to perceive a little embarrassment in giving the answer. As a representative of the people, sir, I consider it my duty as well as my right to answer the question. And if the administration should, in doing what I shall advise, retrieve the good opinion of the people, I will not regret it. What, say the majority to us, what would you do?

What would you have us do? I will tell them, sir, what they should do. I will not withhold my feeble aid from them in their distress, I should not think it manly, fair or humane to do so. We are all embarked in the same ship and must sink or swim together--and although I am a green hand and before the mast, I will do all in my power to keep the vessel from going down. What would you have us do? say gentlemen. Sir I would have them undo all they have done. Yes, sir—all—and at one smack! I would return to the policy of Washington. I would cut up this embargo system, root and branch. If this prescription be not followed soon it will be too late. We shall be able to take no medicine whatever. I know, sir, I am prescribing a bitter pill for the administration—but it is the only one that will answer. Let them take it therefore and it will soon work miracles for the good of the country. Instead of going on accumulating the obstacles to accommodation with Great Britain, let us act an open part. Apply the sponge to your embargo and proclamation and non-importation; and I will venture to say there are no difficulties between us which honest men could not settle in three hours.—Restore us to the policy of the great father of his country. We have had enough of theory and experiment and whim. Let us at last have a little old fashioned practical wisdom.

But gentlemen say this would be submission How submission? Because we have at last found out that by our system of commercial warfare we cannot coerce Great Britain, is an abandonment of that system submission? God help us, sir, if such positions require argument to refute them. No, sir--If under the operation of our system Great Britain yields *she* submits. And can we expect that she will do what we will not? Let us at length open our eyes to the truth. It is not submission to abandon an inefficacious project. Let us discard our prejudices. Hatred and love render men equally unfit to pursue wise counsels. If Great Britain was to come to your terms in consequence of the embargo, what would you say? *that the embargo had done it!* And if the embargo had done it, would the submission not be on *her* part? Under the pretence that we will not submit, considering submission scandalous, we are made to suppose our conduct very fair and kind and generous, when we ask others to do what we shudder at. —There is no disgrace in giving up an impracticable project; and "it is noble even to fail in great attempts." Let the administration have the credit of having failed in the great attempt of coercing Great Britain by an embargo--for a great attempt it certainly was. But as it has failed, there can be no justification for persisting in it; else, that which was a charming speculation at the outset, will in the end degenerate into downright obstinacy.

Repeal the embargo and non-importation acts, rescind the proclamation, and send these resolutions out of the house, and we shall have a chance at least for peace--for a restoration of the general prosperity. The orders of council will not, cannot be persisted in, when you go to the source of our misforsunes--when you lay aside the miserable project of coercing Great Bri-

tain by an embargo—when, by resisting the French edicts, you shew a determination to defend your rights against the real, because the first aggressor.

Before I sit down I beg leave to call the attention of the house to the course which is meditated to bring France to justice. The second of these resolutions discovers the manner in which it is to be done. But, sir, will France, feel the effects of this measure; will she be even displeased at it? Indeed she will not. It will press upon England only. And in the same proportion that it is more powerful than the embargo, in the same proportion will it please, because it will accord with the policy of Napoleon. And in the face of the world, you have already received the plaudits of Bonaparte for the embargo. Can that then be called resistance to the injustice of a foreign power, which, if he could dictate your course she would order to be done? Sir, I am at a loss for words to express my astonishment at hearing that very conduct which France wishes us to pursue, to aid her in her projects upon England, called resistance! Gentlemen are eloquent enough when they speak of French injustice and perfidy; but not one of them has ventured to shew how the embargo has, or the non-intercourse will operate upon her. The first resolution indeed says, that we will not submit to France; but the second, which is to shew the kind of resistance we are to make use of absolutely pledges the nation to that course which France particularly desires! She praised you for imposing the embargo; and if non-intercourse be stronger than embargo, so much the more will your praise be encreased—Nay, I should not wonder if you should be rewarded by a volume of French poetry, in praise of your wisdom, virtue and sincerity. Certainly it will be deserved. Sir, let us not be trifled with in this manner. Let us no longer be dealt with thus unfairly. Do we by the adoption of these resolutions resist Great-Britain and France? No, Sir, they know we do not; and therefore I will not put my trust in the deceivers, who "keep the word of promise to our ear, but break it to our hope."—The conduct pursued towards France I will not call submission. that word does not describe its character. It is much worse than submission. We have all along aided her.—We are about to aid her by the very measure which is called resistance to her. is this conduct calculated to coerce France to justice? Sir, it would be insulting to the house to waste words on this subject—I say words—because the absurdity of the propositon is too palpable to admit.

When I pointed out to gentlemen in conversation, the impropriety of professing to resist France, when we have really become her auxiliary; they have answered, that it cannot be helped. It is calculated they say to strike upon England, and if the lash be not quite long enough to reach France, we cannot help it—that is not their fault. But I entreat them to reflect that the more they wound England, the more do they make it the policy of France to resist—And that if they wish really to have the edicts of both annulled, they do not come a step nearer their object. For whatever England loses by our system, France gains. In a state of war the loss of the

one party is the gain of the other. Thus, though we may injure Britain, her ſufferings will not tell for us ; but for France, we do all we can, but we gain nothing by it. We "rob Peter to pay Paul."

Sir ! By embarking againſt England at this time, we can promiſe ourſelves no good. If we fail, all will agree that our condition will be deplorable. But if we are ruined ! Our only ſafety will be in defeat. I have already proved that England cannot, dare not acknowledge the efficacy of any commercial coercion. You have ſeen enough to know, that ſhe cannot yield to you, until ſhe becomes incapable of reſiſtance. Then ſhe falls— into whoſe hands ! Ours ? No ſir—into the hands of France.—She will ceaſe to exiſt as a nation. And will you then turn round and fight France ? For what ? To compel her to let you trade with England—when there it no England to trade with ? Your utmoſt ſucceſs gives England to France, and you have gained nothing. The whole naval and military eſtabliſhment of Europe is then at the diſpoſal of Bonaparte. You will indeed have mounted the tyger upon the back of the ſhark for your own deſtruction. Yes, ſir, your animoſities may be gratified by overwhelming the Philiſtines in one general deſtruction—but remember you muſt yourſelves be cruſhed in the ruins of the Pagan temples.

I could have wiſhed that it had ſo happenedthat the policy of the laſt year had been preſerved. I would now implore the houſe and the adminiſtration to return to it. No beam of hope can cheer us in going forward ; Peace cannot be attained by the preſent courſe ; on the contrary, it muſt lead us to open war. It is not diſhonourable to retrace our ſteps. No country will diſpute our pride—we have diſplayed enough of that—let us at length be perſuaded that prudence and wiſdom are not the loweſt of national virtues—and that proſperity, liberty and happineſs, are not the loweſt of national objects.

I have not addreſſed you, ſir, on the occaſion, becauſe I wiſhed to wound the ſenſibility of thoſe who are oppoſed to me in political opinions, I have believed that the preſent courſe could bring us to no reſult but that of diſappointment and diſgrace, and perhaps ruin —and I have been compelled to give my reaſons for the belief. If the paſt has been indeed wrong ; let us not obſtinately plunge on in our error. I conjure gentlemen to pauſe one moment before they proceed—that they may attentively ſurvey the preſent and the future. The path to happineſs from which we have ſtrayed, may be eaſily regained—And God grant that we may have the magnanity to return to it.

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